



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Caltrans will Replace Damaged Russian River Bridge in Geyserville

After reviewing damage reports and conferring with the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), Caltrans has decided to replace rather than repair the Russian River Bridge on Highway 128 in Geyserville. The bridge, built in 1932, has been closed since a New Year's Eve storm caused significant damaged to its foundation.

As plans are still in the preliminary stages, it is difficult to specify a date when the new bridge will be open. An aggressive and optimistic schedule would have the bridge opening by the end of summer; however construction impediments and permitting issues may push the date back to the end of the calendar year.

The new bridge will be built on the same alignment as the existing bridge. A temporary construction trestle will be built as a work platform to the north of the current bridge. The existing bridge will be demolished and a new bridge will be built in its place.

CC Meyers will be the contractor for the \$ 5 million contract to demolish the current bridge.

The contract for the building a new bridge has not yet been put out to bid. Preliminary cost estimates put the price tag at approximately \$ 30 million.

Immediately after the storm, Caltrans collected as much data as possible in an attempt to devise a plan for repairing the bridge. However, Caltrans officials had always warned the damage to the bridge could be so significant that repairing the structure might not be feasible. Caltrans was hampered by the fact that the state agency inherited the bridge long ago and no plans for the structure were available.





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Caltrans engineers conferred with officials at the FHWA and concluded that repairing the existing bridge made little economic sense. Additionally, given the damage that the storm inflicted on the underwater foundation, there was no way of determining whether a repaired bridge could support heavier vehicles. Weight restrictions, if implemented, could force large vehicles such as trucks, school buses and RV's to use other bridges.

The building of a new bridge - especially in an environmentally sensitive area - can take many years. However, given the emergency nature of this project, Caltrans and the FHWA were able to classify the construction of a new bridge as an emergency, thereby expediting the schedule to significantly less than a year.

Taking into account the relative time, expense and possible weight restrictions involved in repairing the existing bridge, Caltrans decided that building a new bridge was the way to go.

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